MEMO

TO: Principal, Americus – Sumter High School

FROM: Chris Barr, Social Studies/SPED Inclusion Teacher

RE: Workshop For Special Ed/Regular Ed Teachers

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and the most recent Race to the Top (RT3) program, our school has been charged with ensuring that all students receive an adequate education, including those identified as having special needs. However, in many schools, including ours, teachers have found it difficult to meet the requirements of these policies in regards to their special needs students. The bureaucracy, documentation, and time required to meet these students IEPs has become incredibly burdensome and teachers have found it easier to simply assign passing grades to these students in order to ensure compliance. Especially troubling is that parents and students have found that being labeled as special needs students will virtually guarantee passing grades and academic promotion. This abuse of the special needs programs by teachers, parents, and students is a serious issue and needs to be rectified as soon as possible. I propose that we hold a two day training workshop for our teachers in order to help them meet the requirements of IDEA, NCLB, RT3, and students’ IEPs, and to do it the right way without assigning unearned grades or automatic promotion.

In this two-day workshop, content-area teachers of inclusion classes, special education teachers, and administrators will learn what their actual requirements are. Many teachers believe that they are not allowed to “fail” a student enrolled in a special education program. After clarification of the rules and requirements, teachers and administrators will work together to develop instructional and assessment strategies that will help our special needs students pass their courses and meet state requirements without resorting to assigning unearned grades.

I strongly believe that this will help our school meet its requirements and will help better prepare all of our students for life after they leave our school. At your convenience I would like to meet with you and discuss the logistics of making this workshop happen.